

# A Great Holiday Idea for Fathers

Joshua is an active Watch DOGS (Dads of Great Students) dad at his child's school who came up with a great idea for the holiday season.

Like in many other families—especially those that put emphasis on their faith during the holidays—he and his wife use an Advent calendar to help them and their young sons count down the days in anticipation of Christmas. Maybe you do something similar—and there are all kinds of great resources to help if you wanted to start this.

Well, a few years back, Joshua was working long hours and couldn't always be there with his wife and his boys to go through the daily Advent readings and activities. So he started his own special calendar for the holidays. And you know what he called it?

**DADvent**—of course.

His DADvent calendar was all about simply having fun with his sons, holiday style. He used it as a reminder to do something special for his sons every day leading up to Christmas.

With his schedule, many times that meant doing things while the boys slept. One night he decorated their rooms with paper snowflakes that they saw first thing in the morning. Another night he strung lights from corner to corner. Then there was the night he put up a Christmas tree in each bedroom without waking them up.

Joshua knew it was worth all the late nights and lack of sleep when he heard his 11-year-old say that DADvent activities were a “great memory” and a tradition he looks forward to every year.

And Joshua found that once he was in the habit, these special things spread into other parts of the year. And he started doing similar things for his bride as well.

If you wanted to really follow the Advent calendar, we've already missed the first couple of weeks or so. But there's no reason you can't start right now. Joshua doesn't mind if you use his idea. Go ahead and call it "DADvent."

But whatever you call it, the important part is your attitude and your commitment to make the holidays fun for your kids this year. How cool would it be for them if every day between now and December 25th, you came up with some kind of surprise or small gift or even just spent a few minutes doing something they enjoy?

Maybe you can bake cookies, do a crazy craft project, make some paper angels or whatever. You can find all kinds of ideas online. And the cost would likely be almost nothing.

Here's an idea: On the way home from work today or sometime tomorrow, pick up four boxes of candy canes and hang them on every hook, ledge or doorknob in your home. Announce the official beginning of DADvent, and watch the expressions on your kids' faces.

So, dad, how do you make the holidays special for your children? Share your ideas with other dads either below or on our Facebook page.

### **Action Points for Dads on the Fathering Journey**

- Tell your kids about a holiday tradition that was special for you as a child. Maybe surprise them by doing something similar this year.
- Be purposeful this year about finding ways to have fun as a family—and avoid the common holiday stressors. Consider relaxing a household rule for a few weeks to give your kids the impression that it's a "special"

time.

- Lead your family in spreading the true spirit of the holidays this season by helping someone else who has a need. And prepare to learn something! Often kids can be more sensitive to people's needs than we are.
- Buy a gift for the whole family that everyone can enjoy together, or invest in an activity you can all do together.
- As you decide on gifts for your kids, start thinking about gifts of time that you can also give—like redeemable coupons or a commitment to enjoy a new toy or game with him or her.

**Carey Casey** is the CEO of the National Center for Fathering, a nonprofit organization dedicated to changing the culture of fathering in America by enlisting 6.5 million fathers to make the Championship Fathering Commitment. NCF believes that every child needs a dad they can count on, and uses its resources to inspire and equip men to be the involved fathers, grandfathers and father figures their children need. Subscribe to his weekly email tip by clicking here: [“Yes! I want tips on how to be a great dad who lives out loving, coaching and modeling for my children.”](#)